



Embracing Empathy | Achieving Excellence | Unlocking Opportunities

## **Safeguarding policy**

See also, [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#), Online safety, Anti-bullying, Equality, First Aid & Medication, Health & Safety and Whistleblowing policies

<b>Date</b>	
<b>Signed</b>	



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## KEY CONTACTS

### Designated Safeguarding Lead

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### Chair of governors

Richard McCabe

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### Lead governor for safeguarding

Tracey Page

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### Hertfordshire Children's Services & MASH:

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[protectedreferrals.cs@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:protectedreferrals.cs@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

### Local Authority Designated Officer (Hertfordshire's safeguarding children board):

Community Safety Lead: 03001234043

Head of CP: 01992556937

Consultation Hub: 01438737511

Redbourn Park is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our especially vulnerable students and expects all staff and visitors to share this commitment.

- Our philosophy is to always 'think the unthinkable'.
- Any visitor to the school will always be accompanied by a member of staff to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students.
- If you have a safeguarding or child protection concern, please report what has been disclosed to one of our designated safeguarding leads below as soon as possible, who will record and act, if appropriate, on the information.
- Remember that if there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral can and should be made to children's social care services immediately and that anybody can make a referral.

## Introduction

Our policy applies to all staff, governors working at Redbourn Park Independent School and considers statutory guidance provided by the Department for Education and local guidance issued by Hertfordshire County Council.

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We will ensure that all parents/carers are made aware of our responsibilities with regard to child protection procedures and how we will safeguard and promote the welfare of their children through the publication of this Redbourn Park child protection policy.

These duties and responsibilities, as set out within the Education Act 2002, DfE Statutory Guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and HM Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 are incorporated into this policy.

## Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students. We will endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We will be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

### Safeguarding children is defined as:

- The actions we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm are everyone's responsibility.
- Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

### Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

### Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm. It also relates to the broader aspects of care and education including:

- Students' health and safety and emotional well-being, and their mental and physical health or development.
- Meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The use of reasonable force.
- Meeting the needs of children with medical conditions.
- Providing first aid.
- Educational visits and off-site education.
- Intimate care and emotional wellbeing.
- On-line safety and associated issues.
- Appropriate arrangements to ensure school security, taking into account the local context.
- Keeping children safe from risks, harm and exploitation (KCSIE 2024)

### Safeguarding can involve a range of potential issues such as:

- Neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse.
- Contextualised abuse.
- Bullying, including online bullying (by text message, on social networking sites, and prejudice-based bullying).
- Child on child abuse.
- Racist, disability- based, homophobic, bi-phobic or transphobic abuse.
- Gender based violence/violence against women and girls.
- Extremist behaviour and/or radicalisation.
- Child sexual exploitation, human trafficking, modern slavery or exploitation.
- The impact of new technologies, including 'sexting' and accessing pornography.
- Child on Child Sexual Violence

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- Sexual Harassment and abuse (including child on child)
- Issues which may be specific to a local area or population, for example gang activity, knife crime, youth violence, criminal child exploitation (CCE) and County Lines.
- Is in family circumstances which present challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues.
- Is at risk of or from serious violence and violent crime
- Particular issues affecting children including domestic abuse and violence, female genital mutilation and honour-based abuse and forced marriage.
- 'Upskirting'- The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as Upskirting Act, came into force on 12th April 2019. Upskirting is a criminal offence and reportable by all teachers

Our ethos demonstrates that the effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by putting children at the centre of a system where we listen and hear what they say. Every individual within Redbourn Park will play their part, including working with professionals from other agencies, to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children and keep them safe. We will take opportunities to teach children about important safeguarding issues in a way that is age appropriate.

Our Redbourn Park School is led by senior staff and Governors whose aims are to provide a safe environment and vigilant culture where children and young people can learn and be safeguarded. If there are safeguarding concerns, we will respond with appropriate action in a timely manner for those children who may need help or who may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Where staff members have concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger) they will decide what action to take in conjunction with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Although we advocate that any staff can make a referral to children's social care or MASH, especially where a child is identified as being in immediate danger, they should however ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or a member of the senior leadership team is informed as soon as possible.

We also ensure that all our staff are clear that whilst they should discuss and agree with the DSL any actions to be taken, they are able to escalate their concerns and contact MASH, or social care to seek support for the child if despite the discussion with the DSL their concerns remain. Staff are also informed of Redbourn Park whistleblowing procedures and the contact details for the Local Authority LADO and NSPCC helpline. Staff are aware of the process if they have concerns about another member of staff, and who to report this to.

All new staff have to complete Induction training, where safeguarding policies and procedures are thoroughly explained – including a presentation on the CPOMS reporting system at Redbourn Park. Any concerns are logged on CPOMS are then alerted immediately to the DSL & DDSL where it is then decided what action is to then take place, whether that be a referral, liaising with relevant external agencies. CPOMS allows us to alert leader, and in turn the Safeguarding Governor to keep them updated and process any actions they might add.

The procedures for dealing with allegations:

- 1.) The recipient of an allegation must report it to the DSL as soon as possible and never try to investigate it themselves. If a member of the leadership team is implicated, it must be reported to the head. If the head is implicated, it must be reported to the LADO.
- 2.) A record of the report must be made by the relevant member of staff (depending on point which must be timed, dated and include a clearly written name and signature
- 3.) If the allegation is serious and credible and alleges that a member of staff has a) behaved in way that has harmed or may have harmed a child, b) possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or c) behaved towards children in a way that indicated he/she is unsuitable to work with children, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be informed on the same day

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- 4.) If unsure, call the LADO in any case to discuss the allegation
- 5.) Such consultation in point 3/4 will enable the LADO and the school leader to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action
- 6.) If this leads to a decision that no further action is to be taken this decision and the reasons for it should be recorded by both the school's senior leader and the LADO. They should agree between them the information that should be put in writing to the individual about whom the allegation was made. Both should then consider the action that should follow in respect of that individual and also the person (or persons) who made the allegation
- 7.) If it is decided that the allegation warrants further action the LADO will take this forward
- 8.) The DSL or head should inform the accused person about the allegation as soon as possible, but only after consulting the LADO about whether this is appropriate at this stage and what information can be given to the person
- 9.) Consideration must be given as to whether it is necessary to remove the subject of the allegations from contact with children at the schools, pending investigations and procedures arising from the allegation. Suspension should not be automatic, but should be considered if: a) there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, b) the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or c) the allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal
- 10.) Any decision to suspend shall be taken only after consultation with the LADO. It will consider the safety of the child or children involved and the impact on any enquiry
- 11.) Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation should be dispatched within 24 hours, giving the reasons for the suspension. The person should be informed at that point who their named contact is within the organisation and provided with their contact details
- 12.) The subject of the allegations (whether suspended or not) shall be: a) advised to contact her/his trade union or professional association, b) treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed, processes involved and possible outcomes, c) kept informed of the progress of the case and of the investigation, d) clearly informed of the outcome of any investigation and the implications for disciplinary or related processes and e) provided with appropriate support as appropriate
- 13.) A school leader, usually the DSL or the head, shall be responsible for continuing liaison with Hertfordshire's LADO and all communication between the schools and other agencies that may be involved in processes following an allegation. The LADO will designate alternate arrangements when the head, governor or proprietor is the subject of a concern.
- 14.) Confidentiality is essential and information about an allegation must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to: a) protect children, b) facilitate enquiries, c) avoid victimisation, d) safeguard the rights of the person about whom the allegation has been made and others who might be affected and e) manage disciplinary/complaints aspects
- 15.) If, following the conclusion of child protection processes, further enquiries are pursued for the purpose of disciplinary, regulatory or complaint investigation, they should be arranged in a way that avoids the repeated interviewing of children or other vulnerable witnesses.

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## OUR CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### There are six main elements to our policy:

- Providing a **safe environment** in which children can learn and develop.
- Ensuring **we practice safe recruitment** in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Developing and then **implementing procedures for identifying and reporting** cases, or suspected cases of abuse.
- **Supporting students who have been abused or harmed** in accordance with his/her child protection plan.
- **Raising awareness of safeguarding** children, child protection processes and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Working in partnership with agencies and safeguarding partners in the 'best interest of the child'.
- **We recognise our responsibility to protect** and that due to regular contact with our students, Redbourn Park staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.

### Redbourn Park School will:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to and heard.
- Ensure children know that there are trusted adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried.
- Ensure that every effort is made to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers and colleagues from other agencies.
- Include opportunities in the RSE curriculum (see RSE policy and curriculum policy) for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse by:
  - Recognising and managing risks including online, sexual exploitation, sexting and running away, as well as radicalisation.
  - Developing healthy relationships and awareness of domestic violence, and abuse which is linked to 'honour' such as female genital mutilation and forced marriage, bullying and child on child abuse.
  - Recognising how pressure from others can affect their behaviour.
  - Knowing that as a Redbourn Park we will act swiftly to address any concerns related to serious violence, gang and knife crime or child on child sexual violence or sexual harassment incidents.
- We will take all reasonable measures to ensure any risk of harm to children's welfare is minimised.
- Take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of a child, working to local policies and procedures in full working partnership with agencies.
- Ensure robust child protection arrangements are in place and embedded in the daily life and practice of the school.
- Promote student health and safety.
- Promote safe practice, and challenge unsafe practice.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to deal with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff including volunteers, and the local multi-agency procedures.
- Provide first aid and meet the health needs of children with medical conditions
- Ensure school site security.
- Address drugs and substance misuse issues.
- Support and plan for young people in custody and their resettlement back into the community.
- Work with all agencies regarding missing children, anti-social behaviour/gang activity and violence in the community/knife crime and children at risk of sexual exploitation.

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- Everyone having a duty to safeguard children inside/outside the school environment including school trips, extended school activities, vocational placements and alternative education packages.
- All trips and off-site learning are risk assessed with logistics and plans put in place to fully meet the social, emotional, academic needs for each student – ensuring that their safety is paramount (see students individual risk assessments).

We will follow the procedures set out by Hertfordshire and other LA's, taking account of guidance issued by the DfE in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 to:

- Ensure we have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who is a member of the school/college leadership team, and a Deputy Safeguarding Lead for child protection/safeguarding who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead role is written into their job description and clarifies the role and responsibilities included.
- Ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for child protection/safeguarding.
- Ensure that we have a Designated Teacher for Children Looked After (CLA).
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary, supply staff and volunteers) and the governing body knows the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, their deputies responsible for child protection, and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and their responsibility for referring any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or to children's social care/police if a child is in immediate danger.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of the early help process and understand their role in making referrals or contributing to early help offers and arrangements.
- Ensure that there is a whistleblowing policy and culture where staff can raise concerns about unsafe practice, and that these concerns will be taken seriously.
- Ensure that there is a complaints system in place for children and families.
- Ensure that parents understand the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection and safeguarding by setting out its obligations on the school's website and appropriate literature.
- Notify Children's Social Care if there is an unexplained absence for a child who is subject to a child protection plan and where no contact can be established with the child or a parent or appropriate adult linked to the child.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and cooperate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters, including attendance at child protection conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer to the matter immediately; documenting and collating information on individual children to support early identification, referral and actions to safeguard.
- Ensure all records are logged on CPOMS, with actions and follow ups recorded under the same incident/alert.
- Ensure that we follow robust processes to respond when children are missing from education or missing from home or care.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.
- Apply confidentiality appropriately.
- Liaise with the Safeguarding Governor and appropriate professionals if escalation procedures are required if there are any concerns about the actions or inaction of social care staff or staff from other agencies.

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## SUPPORTING CHILDREN

We recognise that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a positive sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. We also recognise that there are children who are more vulnerable than others, which include children with special educational needs and or disabilities.

At Redbourn Park will endeavour to support the student through:

- Developing the content of the curriculum to ensure broad and informative content is taught to enhance student's knowledge and understanding in keeping themselves safe and what to do if they need help or support.
- Maintaining a Redbourn Park ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment, and which gives students a sense of them being valued.
- The school behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy and child on child abuse policy which is kept up to date with national and local guidance and which is aimed at supporting vulnerable students at our Redbourn Park School.
- At Redbourn Park we will proactively ensure that all children know that some behaviours are unacceptable and will need to be addressed but as members of our school they are valued and will be supported through the time required to deal with any abuse or harm that has occurred, or outcomes from incidents.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the student such as Children's Social Care Behaviour and Attendance Service and Education Psychology Service, use of Complex Case Resolution Meetings and the Early Help etc.
- Ensuring that, where a student leaves and is subject to a child protection plan, child in need plan or where there have been wider safeguarding concerns, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.
- Ensuring that the vulnerability of children with special educational needs and or disabilities is recognised and fully supported by having immediate access to key/identified staff in a safe and secure environment.

## RECRUITING, INDUCTING AND SUPPORTING STAFF

- The leadership team and governing body of Redbourn Park will ensure that all safer working practices and recruitment procedures are followed in accordance with the guidance set out in Kcsie 2024
- School leaders, staff and members of the governing body will be appropriately trained in safer working practices
- Statutory pre-employment checks and references from previous employers are an essential part of the recruitment process. We will ensure we adopt the appropriate necessary procedures to carry out the checks required and where any concerns arise, we will seek advice and act in accordance with national guidance.
- The school has in place recruitment, selection and vetting procedures in accordance with Kcsie 2024 and Independent school standards and maintains a Single Central Record (SCR), which is reviewed regularly and updated in accordance with KCSIE updates.
- Staff will have access to advice on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and will be aware of the School Staff Handbook, which includes contact between staff and students outside the work context. Staff can access a copy of this through the handbook, with these details being discussed during induction meetings.

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- Newly appointed staff will be informed of our arrangements for safer working practices by their line managers during their induction meetings, before beginning working and contact with students.
- In the event of any complaint or allegation against a member of staff, the headteacher (or the Designated Safeguarding Lead) will be notified immediately. If it relates to the headteacher, the Governing body will be informed without delay. We will respond to all allegations robustly and appropriately in collaboration with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) LADO/Allegation Officer.
- Staff may find some of the issues relating to child protection and the broader areas of safeguarding upsetting and may need support which should be provided by the school.
- Advice and support will be made available where appropriate.
- All new employees will be appropriately inducted to their role, with clear and robust training on safeguarding.
- All employees are subject to an online search and are informed of this as part of safer recruitment

This policy, together with the following, should be read alongside and in conjunction with other policies and statutory guidance regarding the safety and welfare of children. These together will make up the suite of policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in this school:

- Anti-Bullying
- Online safety
- Equalities
- First Aid & Medication
- Health & Safety
- 'What We Do and How We Do It' at Redbourn Park School
- Whistleblowing

All adults working with, or on behalf of, our school must always follow all of our procedures.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### All staff and volunteers

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone in our school who comes into contact with children and their families have a role to play in safeguarding children. All staff in our school considers, at all times, what is in the best interests of children.

Redbourn Park School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our students, especially those who are most vulnerable, and expects all staff to share this commitment. Our training mantra and philosophy is to always 'think the unthinkable'.

All staff must be clear about their own role and that of others in providing a caring and safe environment for all children and must know how they should respond to any concerns about an individual child that may arise. To achieve this, Redbourn Park School will ensure that all staff know that Richard McCabe, Head Teacher, is our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has overall responsibility for child protection and safeguarding. Though some of the duties inherent to this role can and will be delegated to the deputy DSLs in order that work is completed most efficiently, the ultimate responsibility remains with the DSL. In the absence of the DSL, the deputy head will fulfil the safeguarding duties.

All safeguarding leads and the head teacher have received advanced level training in order to undertake their roles and are also safer recruitment trained. All safeguarding leads receive updated training at least every two years; (From external local authority safeguarding specialists) and in addition, keep up to date with safeguarding developments at least annually in-house.

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All staff within our school are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help to children to prevent concerns from escalating. All staff contribute to providing a safe environment in which children can learn by ensuring all activities are accordingly planned, risk assessed with the staff having appropriate knowledge of student's backgrounds, knowledge and understanding – so schemes of work can be accordingly planned, incorporating appropriate PSHCE/RSE lessons.

Staff know in the first instance to report concerns via a CPOMS form, alerting the Designated Safeguarding Lead and understand they may be required to support other agencies and professionals in assessments or referrals.

We acknowledge the importance of children and social workers meeting during the school day where required and how our DSL works with social care and safeguarding partners to ensure children are subject to child protection, child in need and LAC plans are kept safe and the child's needs are met. We are aware that children who need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs are potentially at greater risk of harm (KCSIE 2024), therefore it is vital that effective communication and sharing information is effective and timely, ensuring all concerns are efficiently logged on CPOMS appropriately actioning them.

We recognise how a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educational disadvantage in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health (see KCSIE 2024). With this in mind we ensure that we build effective rapport with all students and ensure that we tailor their educational offers to meet each individual's needs – ensuring all activities are accordingly risk assessed, with safety and safeguarding being paramount.

## SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

All our staff are aware of systems within Redbourn Park and these are explained to them as part of staff induction, which include our child protection policy; the employee code of conduct and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.

Our school utilises an induction checklist when staff are inducted which includes the above, but also other policy and procedural information. They are given guidance and training on how to use the CPOMS logging system when reporting a concern. All our staff are aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989 and understand the role they may have in these assessments.

All our staff know what to do if a child is raising concerns or makes a disclosure of abuse and/or neglect. Staff will maintain a level of confidentiality whilst liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and children's social care. Our staff will never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a disclosure or allegation, recognising this may not be in the best interest of the child.

## STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff have a key role to play in identifying concerns and reporting them on CPOMS.

To achieve this, they will:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or have concerns
- Plan opportunities within the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to assess and manage risk appropriately and keep themselves safe.
- Attend training in order to be aware of and alert to the signs of abuse.
- Maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" with regards to safeguarding.

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- Record their concerns if they are worried that a child is being abused and report these to the DSL as soon as practical that day. If the DSL is not contactable immediately the Deputy DSL should be informed.
- Be prepared to refer directly to social care, and the police if appropriate, if there is a risk of significant harm and the DSL or their Deputy is not available.
- Follow the allegations procedures if the disclosure is an allegation against a member of staff.
- Follow the procedures set out by the NSCP and take account of guidance issued by the DfE KCSIE 2024.
- Support students in line with their child protection plan, child in need plan, LAC Care Plan.
- Treat information with confidentiality but never promising to "keep a secret".
- Notify the DSL or their DDSL of any child on a child protection plan or child in need plan who has unexplained absence.
- Liaise with other agencies that support students and provide early help.
- Ensure they know who the DSL and Deputy DSL's are and know how to contact them.
- Have an awareness of the Child Protection Policy, the Behaviour Policy, the Positive Workplace policy and/or Staff Handbook (or Code of Conduct), procedures relating to the safeguarding response for children who go missing from education and the role of the DSL.

## **SENIOR LEADERSHIP/MANAGEMENT TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Contribute to inter-agency working in line with HM Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance.
- Provide a coordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified.
- Ensure all staff, supply staff and volunteers are alert to the definitions of abuse and indicators (KCSIE 2024), and through access to regular training opportunities and updates.
- Ensure staff are alert to the various factors that can increase the need for early help (KCSIE 2024).
- Working with Children's Social Care, support their assessment and planning processes including the school's attendance at conference and core group meetings as appropriate.
- Carry out tasks delegated by the governing body such as training of staff, safer recruitment and maintaining a single central register.
- Provide support and advice on all matters pertaining to safeguarding and child protection to all staff regardless of their position within the school.
- Treat any information shared by staff or students with respect and follow agreed policies and procedures.
- Ensure that allegations or concerns against staff are dealt with in accordance with guidance from Department for Education (DfE KCSIE 2024 Part Four 'Allegations of abuse made against teachers, and other staff, including supply teachers and volunteers').

## **TEACHERS (INCLUDING NQT's) AND HEAD TEACHERS – PROFESSIONAL DUTY**

The Teachers Standards 2012 remind us that teachers, newly qualified teachers and headteachers should safeguard children and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of our professional duties. The Children and Social Work Act of 2017, places responsibilities for designated teachers to have responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales. At Redbourn Park we promote achievements of our CLA students by nominating them for Awards from their Local Authorities, sharing the achievements at PEPs and also CLA reviews.

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Both students and staff are aware of who the DSL and DDSL staff are, they are on safeguarding posters in every classroom.

## DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

We have a Designated Safeguarding Lead who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding children and child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is a senior member of the school leadership team.

Deputy safeguarding lead(s) will provide additional support to ensure the responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding children are fully embedded within the school ethos and that specific duties are discharged. They will assist the Designated Safeguarding Lead in managing referrals, attending Child Protection Conferences, reviews and meetings and supporting the child/children.

We acknowledge the need for effective and appropriate communication between all members of staff in relation to safeguarding students. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure there is a structured procedure within the school, which will be followed by all of the members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse – using the schools reporting system.

### The Designated Safeguarding Lead is expected to:

- Manage Referrals
- Manage all CPOMS
- Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies.
- Support staff who make referrals to children’s social care and other referral pathways.
- Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child and the DBS as required.
- Meet with SLT on a regular basis to discuss and review concerns and actions.
- Depending upon the concerns will depend upon the student’s logistics and timetable for that moment in time – liaising with all external agencies and staff involved.
- The DSL will ultimately be responsible for oversight of any child on placements or alternative education arrangements, fully cataloguing the child’s journey.

## WORK WITH OTHERS

- Liaise with the headteacher (where the Designated Safeguarding Lead role is not carried out by the headteacher) to inform him/her of any issues and ongoing investigations.
- As required, liaise with the ‘case manager’ (KCSIE 2024) and the LADO where there are child protection concerns/allegations that relate to a member of staff.
- Liaise with the case manager and the LADO/ LADO Allegation Officer where there are concerns about a staff member.
- Liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and deciding when to make a referral by liaising with other agencies and acts as a source of support, advice and expertise for other staff.
- Take part in strategy discussions or attend inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so and to contribute to the assessment of children.
- Liaise with the local authority and other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- CPOMS is to be actioned and updated as and when necessary, securely alerting the appropriate staff
- Curriculum development and student voice meetings – listening to this feedback proves a vital role in the development of the curriculum and through learning experiences for both children and staff. Staff also undertake regular performance management meetings and supervision meetings with their line managers, where good practice/concerns can be addressed. The SLT operates an open-door policy to staff and students, where they can voice the concerns and opinions as and when needed. RSE will be

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taught as part of the PSHCE curriculum, parents are provided with termly newsletters and are also invited into school once a term for coffee mornings where they can seek advice and support.

## TRAINING & BEST PRACTICE

- Formal Designated Safeguarding Lead training will be undertaken every two years. Informal training and updating of knowledge and skills will be at regular intervals, undertaken at least annually. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for their own training and should obtain access to resources or any relevant refresher training.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead is also responsible for ensuring all other staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities access up to date and timely safeguarding training and maintains a register or data base to evidence the training.

### The training undertaken should enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead to:

- Have a working knowledge of Hertfordshire and other Local Authorities, the conduct of a child protection conference, and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- Ensure that each member of staff has access to the child protection policy and procedures.
- Be alert to the specific needs of children in need, including those with special educational needs and or disabilities and young carers.
- Be able to keep detailed, accurate, written records of concerns and referrals via CPOMS.
- Understand the Prevent Duty and provide advice and support to staff on protecting and preventing children from the risk of radicalisation and being grooming into extremist behaviours and attitudes (KCSIE 2024).
- Understand the reporting requirements for FGM.
- Understand and support children to keep safe when online and when they are learning at home. (KCSIE 2024).
- Encourage a culture of protecting children, listening to children and their wishes and feelings.

## Raise awareness

- Ensure that the child protection policies are known, understood and used appropriately.
- Ensure that the child protection policy is reviewed annually in consultation with staff members, and procedures are updated and reviewed regularly and implemented, and that the governing body is kept up to date and actively involved.
- Work strategically to ensure policies and procedures are up to date and drive and support development work within the school.
- Ensure that the child protection policy is available to parents and carers and uploaded to the school website and make parents/carers aware that referrals may be made about suspected abuse or neglect.
- Ensure all staff receive induction training covering child protection before working with children and can recognise and report any concerns immediately as they arise.

## Child Protection file

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that when a child leaves the school or college their 'child protection', 'child in need' file or 'confidential' file is transferred to the new school or college at the same time the child goes on roll of its new school or education provision.
- Reports from CPOMS will be generated and securely shared with the new provision – when possible hand delivered/recorded delivery with a received receipt signed from the new provision, within 2 months of receiving confirmation of where the student is to be educated.

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## Availability

During term time the Designated Safeguarding Lead or DDSL will always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school or college to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Appropriate arrangements will also need to be in place for any out of school hours' activities in line with the guidance contained in DfE KCSIE 2024.

## Headteacher

### The Headteacher of the school will ensure that:

- The policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are fully implemented and followed by all staff.
- The school has an up to date Single Central Record (SCR) which is reviewed regularly and is compliant with statutory guidance.
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the Designated Safeguarding Lead and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of children.
- All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice with regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed whistle-blowing policies.
- The Headteacher will ensure all staff including supply teachers have access to, read and understand the requirements placed on them
- The Headteacher will ensure there are mechanisms in place to assist staff to fully understand and discharge their role and responsibilities as set out in KCSIE 2024.
- Where there is an allegation made against a member of staff (either paid or unpaid) that meets the criteria for a referral to the LADO, then the headteacher will discuss the allegation immediately with the LADO (within 24 hours) and ensure that cases are managed in line with expectations in KCSiE (2024). If the allegation is against the Headteacher, then the Chair of the Governing Body or LADO will manage the allegation.

## Governing Body

- The governing body (and proprietors) will be collectively responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the school's ethos and reflected in the school's day to day safeguarding practices by:
- Ensuring there is an individual member of the governing body to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding and champion child protection issues in the school.
- Ensuring that the school has effective policies and procedures in line with statutory guidance (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018)
- Ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are in place for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to promote a child's welfare.
- Recognising the importance of information sharing between agencies through the statutory guidance provided within KCSIE (2024).
- Ensuring cooperation with the local authority and other safeguarding partners.
- Appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead from the leadership team to take lead responsibility for child protection/safeguarding and that a Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is appointed and appropriately trained.

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- Ensuring that all staff, supply teachers and governors read and fully understand at least KCSIE 2024 Part One, as a minimum, and ensure that there are mechanisms in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities as required within the guidance.
- Ensuring that the governing body understands it is collectively responsible for the school's safeguarding arrangements, even though a governor will be nominated as the 'Safeguarding Governor' and person who will champion all safeguarding requirements.
- All members of the governing body will undertake training about child protection to ensure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, order to discharge their responsibilities and act as the school 'critical friend'.
- The Chair of Governors and named Safeguarding Governor will access role specific training to enable them to comply and discharge their child protection/ safeguarding responsibilities.
- The Governing body will collectively ensure there is a training strategy in place for all staff, including the headteacher, so that child protection training is undertaken with refreshed in line with KCSIE 2024
- Ensuring that staff undergo safeguarding child protection training at induction and that there are arrangements in place for staff to be regularly updated to ensure that safeguarding remains a priority.
- Ensuring that temporary staff who work with children are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities
- Ensuring there are procedures in place to manage allegations against staff and exercise disciplinary functions in respect of dealing with a complaint.
- Ensuring that arrangements/procedures are in place to manage 'low level' concerns (allegations and concerns about a staff member that after initial consideration by the DSL do not meet the criteria for a referral to LADO).
- Ensuring a response if there is an allegation against the headteacher by liaising with the LADO or other appropriate officers within the local authority.
- Ensuring appropriate responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse, including child sexual exploitation and going missing in future.
- Be aware of the issues involving the complexity of serious violence and sexual violence and sexually harmful behaviour and ensure the school has the training and resources to manage any concerns or incidents harmful.
- Be alert to the growing concerns involving knife crime and ensure the school works closely with the police and safeguarding partners to raise awareness of the impact of such crime and adopt proactive practice to address concerns locally and within the community.
- Giving staff the opportunities to contribute and shape safeguarding arrangements and child protection policy.
- Prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, making decisions about additional checks and ensuring volunteers are supervised as required.
- Ensure at least one person on an interview panel has completed safer recruitment training.
- Recognising that certain children are more vulnerable than others, such as looked after children and children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Be open to accepting that child abuse and incidents can happen within the school and be available to act decisively upon them.

## Looked After Children – The Role of Designated Teacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Our designated teacher is Steve Lloyd

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- A teacher is appointed who has responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who are looked after. They have the appropriate training. The Designated Teacher will work with the Virtual School to ensure that the progress of the child is supported.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also have details of the child's social worker and the name of the Head of the Virtual School. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will work closely with the Designated Teacher, as we recognise that children may have been abused or neglected before becoming looked after. We will ensure their ongoing safety and wellbeing as well as supporting their education, through linking with their social worker, carers and parents where appropriate.
- We also recognise those children who were previously Looked After potentially remain vulnerable and all staff will be informed of the importance of maintaining support for them through our school. As a school we will continue to recognise the importance of working with agencies and take prompt actions where necessary to safeguard these children, who may remain vulnerable.

## Care Leavers

We recognise those children and young people who cease to be Looked After and become 'care leavers', should remain supported and our Designated Teacher and school staff will work with the Personal Advisor appointed for them, where one is appointed, to help develop a pathway plan with them and the young person.

## Identifying Concerns

All members of staff, volunteers and governors will know how to identify students who may be being harmed and then how to respond to a student who discloses abuse, or where others raise concerns about them. Our staff will be familiar with procedures to be followed.

Staff understand that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition, and that in most cases multiple issues will overlap with each other. Staff who regularly come into contact with children are aware of the DfE guidance What to do if you're worried a child is being abused

### **Some of the following signs might be indicators of abuse or neglect:**

- Children whose behaviour changes – they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed;
- Children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty;
- Children with consistently poor hygiene;
- Children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason;
- Children who don't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities;
- Children who are having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry;
- Children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers;
- Children who reach developmental milestones, such as learning to speak or walk, late, with no medical reason;
- Children who are regularly missing from school or education;
- Children who are reluctant to go home after school;
- Children with poor school attendance and punctuality, or who are consistently late being picked up;
- Parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns;
- Parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs, are influenced by gangs and drug and knife crime;

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- Children who have limited or no support or supervision when online and or using social media sites outside of their understanding or age limits.
- Children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age;
- Children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why;
- Children who talk about running away; and
- Children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.
- Children with mental or physical health issues or needs.
- Children or young people with 'carer responsibilities beyond their age or limitations'.

## ABUSE

The four categories of child abuse are as follows:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Neglect

### Physical Abuse:

A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

#### Some of the Possible Indicators Could Include:

May be recognised by: Children with frequent injuries, injury such as bruising, bite marks, burns and scalds, fractures but also by aggressive behaviour. It may also be an indicator of concern where a parent gives an explanation inconsistent with the injury or gives several different explanations for the injury.

### Emotional Abuse:

the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

#### Some of the Possible Indicators could include:

May be recognised by: Developmental delay, attachment issues, aggressive behaviour, appeasing behaviour, watchfulness or stillness, low self-esteem, withdrawn or a loner, or having difficulty in forming relationships. Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise as signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. Signs of emotional abuse may be associated or similar to other forms of abuse so presence of emotional abuse may indicate other abuse is prevalent as well.

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## Sexual Abuse:

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

### Some of the Possible Indicators Could Include:

May be recognised by: Inappropriate sexualised conduct, age inappropriate sexualised play or conversation, sexually harmful behaviour – contact or non-contact, self-harm, eating disorders, continual, inappropriate or excessive masturbation, anxiousness or unwillingness to remove clothes – sports/ PE etc, pain or itching in genital area, blood on underclothes, bruising in genital region and/or inner thighs etc.

## Neglect:

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### Some of the Possible Indicators Could Include:

May be recognised by: Being constantly hungry; constantly tired; have a poor state of clothing; be emaciated; have untreated medical problems; be frequently late or have poor or non-attendance at school; have low self-esteem; display neurotic behaviour and/or have poor social relationships, have poor personal hygiene. A neglected child may also be apathetic, fail to thrive, or be left with or in the care of adults under the influence of alcohol or drug misuse.

## CONTEXTUALISED SAFEGUARDING

We recognise safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of school and/or can occur between children outside of school. All our staff, but particularly our Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL's) will consider the context within which such incidents and or behaviours occur. We recognise this is known as 'contextual safeguarding' and will consider by assessing whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that threaten their safety or welfare. In such cases we will work with safeguarding agencies and support the child and family as part of any referral process.

Arrangements, responses and support mechanisms are in place to address areas of contextualised safeguarding, which includes:

- Child Sexual Exploitation – CSE.
- Radicalisation and Extremism.
- Criminal Child Exploitation – CCE.
- Serious Youth Violence - County Lines.
- Human Trafficking.
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour – HSB.
- Sexual Violence and Sexually Harmful Behaviour

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Referrals will be made to the relevant external agencies and local authorities if any child is deemed to be at risk of the above. The DSL will primarily make these referrals and liaise with social workers, local authorities as and when necessary/appropriate.

Our staff will be alert to the potential needs for a social care referral child who:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs.
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan EHCP).
- is a young carer.
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups.
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home.
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- is at risk of modern-day slavery, trafficking or exploitation.
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse.
- has returned home to their family from care.
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect.
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- has an age inappropriate understanding of sexualised behaviours.
- is privately fostered.

All our staff are aware they must always act in the 'best interest of the child' and report or refer concerns in accordance with our school policies and procedures.

## CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

We recognise that children with special educational needs (SEN) and or disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Children with SEN and or disabilities are especially vulnerable when identifying concerns due to their impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, language and communication needs which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening.

This policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children which include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.
  - children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.
  - addressing individual behaviour concerns and incidents considering the child's SEN and disabilities.
- (Please see any student profiles, care plans, individual risk assessments for students for further and specific in-depth information)

## ATTENDANCE & CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)

We know that a child's unexplained absence from school could mean that they are at risk of harm and that a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. We have a clear attendance policy, and:

Our school is small, and thus attendance is easy to track closely. Any child going missing from education will always get immediate attention from the DSL. Staff are trained to be alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage

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- We will always seek to clarify the reason for a child's absence from school with the child's parent or carer as soon as is practicable on the first day, the reason for absence will be recorded on the register. If we are unable to obtain the reason for a student being absent, we will attempt to contact the student's emergency contacts. We ask for at least two emergency contacts for every student. At this stage, if we have been unable to contact the family or emergency contacts, a home visit will be carried out. As a last resort, if the school has not been able to ascertain where a student is after following the steps above, the student will be classed as a 'missing child' and they will be reported to the police.
- We will also always report an unexplained absence of a child with a Child Protection Plan to the child's social worker within one day
- We will always report a continued absence (10 or more school days) about which we have not been notified by the parent or carer to the Local Authority's SEN Team and Education Welfare Service
- We will always report to the local authority the name of any child who has been newly registered to attend our school but does not arrive on the expected day
- We will always report to the Education Welfare Service the continued absence of a child known or thought to have been taken overseas if the child does not return to school on the expected return date
- We maintain accurate attendance and admissions registers (all students are on both), in line with statutory requirements. This includes paying careful attention to off-rolling students in association with the local authority and knowing, and recording, student destinations consistently on the admissions register. Where a student destination is unknown, and unable to be sought after significant follow-up, the local authority, education welfare service and/or social care services will be informed
- We do not 'delete' students from the admissions register. We alert the child's local authority immediately if:
  - o the student has been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home education
  - o the student has ceased to attend school
  - o the student has been certified as medically unfit to attend school
  - o the student is in custody

Keeping local authorities up to date is crucial so that they can check if children of compulsory school age are missing education, and therefore might be in danger of not receiving an education and be at risk of abuse or neglect.

On the rare occasions that we exclude students for a fixed term (usually a day), we put this in writing to both the family and the placing local authority. While we provide the student with work to complete during their external exclusion, we are not responsible for the student's safety and welfare during their time at home.

## **EXTREMISM & RADICALISATION (THE PREVENT DUTY AND CHANNEL)**

Since 2010, when the Government published the 'Prevent Strategy' (the key prevention aspect of Contest), there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from extremism. There have been several occasions, both locally and nationally, in which extremist groups have attempted to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to hold extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

Redbourn Park School values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs and ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Both children and teachers have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with a responsibility. Free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in

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which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. Redbourn Park School is clear that exploitation and radicalisation is viewed as a safeguarding concern and must be dealt with accordingly.

ALL staff at Redbourn Park School must complete Prevent training as part of their induction and will receive regular briefings and update training.

## **FORCED MARRIAGE & HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE**

A 'forced' marriage is distinct from a consensual 'arranged' marriage because it is without the valid consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. A child who is forced into marriage is at risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse. Information about a forced marriage may come from the child themselves, the child's peer group, a relative or member of the child's local community or from another professional. Forced marriage may also become apparent when other family issues are addressed, e.g. domestic violence, self-harm, child abuse or neglect. Forced marriage may involve the child being taken out of the country for the ceremony, is likely to involve non-consensual/under-age sex and refusal to go through with a forced marriage has sometimes been linked to 'honour killing'. Honour-based violence is an ancient cultural tradition that encourages violence towards family members who are considered to have dishonoured their family. It is rooted in domestic violence and is often planned and enacted by family members and associates, meaning victims are at risk from their parents and families.

School staff should respond to suspicions of a forced marriage or honour-based violence by alerting the DSL who will make a referral to Children's Social Care and if the risk is acute, to the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team.

School staff should not treat any allegations of forced marriage or honour-based violence as a domestic issue and send the child back to the family home. It is not unusual for families to deny that a forced marriage is intended, and once aware of professional concern, they may move the child and bring forward both travel arrangements and the marriage. For this reason, staff should not approach the family or family friends, or attempt to mediate between the child and family, as this will alert them to agency involvement. Further information and advice can be obtained from the Forced Marriage Unit [www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage](http://www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage) or 020 70080151 and the Honour Based Violence Helpline 0800 599 9247. Again, as with all concerns, please alert the DSL as soon as possible.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Domestic violence and abuse can be defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

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The current UK definition of domestic violence includes incidences between people aged 16 or over, but it is important to note that violence and abuse can occur in relationships between children and young people at any age.

School staff will look out for the signs of relationship abuse and educate children about what healthy relationships look like and what abusive relationships are.

Where concerns exist that a student may be at risk of domestic violence and abuse or experiencing relationship abuse, the DSL will be informed as soon as possible and the concern will be logged on CPOMS. The DSL will alert the relevant agencies and work with other professionals in order to safeguard the child concerned.

Staff are also aware that Refuge runs a national domestic abuse helpline (0808 2000 247) which provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about others.

## **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION**

Female genital mutilation (sometimes referred to as female circumcision) refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Female Genital Mutilation affects girls particularly from North African countries, including Egypt, Sudan, Somalia and Sierra Leone. Although our schools have no children from these backgrounds and consider our tiny number of girls in our schools to be safe from FGM, we will continue to review our policy annually and to include it in annual update training for all staff. School staff should be alert to the following indicators:

- The family comes from a community that is known to practise FGM
- A child may talk about a long holiday to a country where the practice is prevalent
- A child may confide that she is to have a 'special procedure' or to attend a special occasion
- A child may request help from a teacher or another adult
- Any female child born to a woman or has a sister who has been subjected to FGM must be considered to be at risk, as must other female children in the extended family

It is illegal in the UK to allow girls to undergo FGM either in this country or abroad. It is important to note that all staff have a duty to report personally any concerns they may have about girls at risk of FGM which will be shared with the police. Any concerns must be immediately shared with the DSL and teachers are aware that they have a mandatory duty to report known cases of FGM.

## **BULLYING (AND ALL FORMS OF, INCLUDING CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE)**

We understand that bullying, including cyber-bullying, is harmful to children. We have an anti-bullying policy that sets out our aim of ensuring no child becomes a victim of any form of bullying and the work that we carry out in school to foster an environment where bullying behaviour is known to be unacceptable. We will always take seriously any reports of bullying and respond appropriately.

We understand that bullying may take different forms and may include, as examples, racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic and biphobia behaviours. Any such reported or observed incident will be dealt with in accordance with our anti-bullying policy.

## **ONLINE SAFETY**

We recognise that children's use of the internet is an important part of their education but that there are risks of harm associated with its use. We have an online safety policy that addresses how we seek to minimise those risks in school and teach children how to stay safe when using the internet in their lives

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outside of school. We also recognise that all members of staff must always be mindful of the need to follow our policy of acceptable use of our IT equipment.

New technologies have become integral to the lives of children and young people today, both within schools and in their lives outside of school. The requirement to ensure that children and young people are able to use the internet and related communications technologies appropriately and safely is addressed as part of our wider duty of care to which all who work in schools are bound. The use of these exciting and innovative tools in school and at home has been shown to raise educational standards and promote achievement. It is important that the DSL has a good understanding of the filtering and monitoring infrastructure in place as well as the wider team having training and induction around systems in place and expectations.

Unfortunately, the use of these new technologies can put students at risk within and outside the school; students' access to their mobile devices is limited and monitored during the school day, this helps to safeguard students and ensure they are not accessing any inappropriate material on their personal devices. If any such issue should arise, further restrictions will be implemented to appropriately address the individual incident. While filters should not have overly restrictive parameters, as it may place unreasonable restraints on what students can be taught. It is also fundamental to be aware of some of the potential dangers that the internet can pose, including:

- Access to illegal, harmful, or inappropriate images, video games or other content
- Unauthorised access to/loss of/sharing of personal information
- The risk of being subject to grooming
- The sharing/distribution of personal images without an individual's consent or knowledge
- Inappropriate communication/contact with others, including strangers
- Sexting
- Implications of geolocation
- Cyber-bullying
- An inability to evaluate the quality, accuracy, and relevance of information on the internet
- The potential for excessive use which may have a negative impact on the social and emotional development and learning of the young person.

Material published by children and staff in a social context which is considered to bring the schools reputation into disrepute or considered harmful to, or harassment of, another child or member of the organisation will be considered a safeguarding issue and a breach of conduct and behaviour and treated accordingly, as per behaviour, equality, anti-bullying and/or staff conduct policies/procedures.

## **SEXTING, SHARING NUDES & SEMI-NUDES**

The DFE produced guidance on 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: how to respond to an incident' (2020), alongside previous guidance from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) on how to tackle sexting and 'youth produced sexual imagery' as sharing photos and videos online is part of daily life for many people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives. This increase in the speed and ease of sharing imagery has brought concerns about young people producing and sharing sexual imagery of themselves. This can expose them to risks, particularly if the imagery is shared further, including embarrassment, bullying and increased vulnerability to child sexual exploitation.

Making, possessing, and distributing any imagery of someone under 18 which is 'indecent' is illegal. The relevant legislation is contained in the Protection of Children Act 1978 (England and Wales) as amended in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales). Specifically, it is an offence to possess, distribute, show, and make indecent images of children. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales) defines a child, for the purposes of indecent images, as anyone under the age of 18.

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Although the production of such imagery will likely take place outside of school, these issues often manifest in schools working with children and young people. Staff respond swiftly and confidently to ensure that children are safeguarded, supported, and educated.

Although the production of such imagery will likely take place outside of school, these issues often manifest in schools working with children and young people. Staff respond swiftly and confidently to ensure that children are safeguarded, supported and educated and are aware of the following:

- Never view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery, or ask a child to share or download – this is illegal.
- If they have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has shown it before you could ask them not to), report this to the DSL (or DDSL) as soon as possible and seek support.
- Do not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it.
- Do not ask the student or students who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the DSL (or DDSL).
- Do not share information about the incident with other members of staff, the student(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
- Do not say or do anything to blame or shame any student involved.
- Do explain to the student(s) that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL (or DDSL).

The response to these incidents should be guided by the principle of proportionality and the primary concern at all times should be the welfare and protection of the young people involved.

All incidents involving sexting and youth produced sexual imagery should be responded to in line with the school's CPOMS system.

- The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff
- There should be subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate)
- Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm
- At any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

In many cases, education settings may respond to incidents without involving the police, for example where an incident can be defined as 'experimental' and there is no evidence of abusive or aggravating elements. The police may, however, need to be involved in some cases to ensure thorough investigation, including the collection of all evidence (for example, through multi-agency checks). Where there are abusive and/or aggravating factors, incidents should always be referred to the police through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Even when the police are involved, a criminal justice response and formal sanction against a child or young person would only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

## CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

Sexual exploitation can take many forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for attention/affection, accommodation, or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power within the relationship. The perpetrator always holds power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops. Redbourn Park School attempts to identify young people who are vulnerable to, or at risk of, sexual exploitation and who need services and interventions to keep them safe. We will pass on any information about CSE issues affecting the schools, for example concerns about adults hanging around the school, to the police.

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## SEXUAL VIOLENCE & SEXUAL HARASSMENT BETWEEN PEERS

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It may involve a single child or group of children sexually harassing or being sexually violent towards another child or group of children. It may happen both physically or verbally, online, or offline. Evidence suggests that girls, children with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND), children who are looked after (CLA) and children who identify as LGBT are at greater risk. It is important that all disclosures are taken seriously, victims are supported and there is a clear message that it is never acceptable.

### Sexual harassment can include:

- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and calling someone sexualised names
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting
- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (It is important to consider when any of these crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos, or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- Online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence and may include non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos. sexualised online bullying; unwanted sexual comments and message (including, on social media);
- Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.
- Any experience of sexual violence and sexual harassment is likely to have a significant impact on a student's emotional wellbeing and adversely affect their educational attainment.

The initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.
- Staff are to report any concerns about a student to the designated safeguarding lead and log it on a CPOMS.

### UPSKIRTING

Upskirting typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

## GANGS & CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION

Within the 'criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines' guidance (September, 2018), the UK Government defines county lines as a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal

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networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is broader than just county lines, and includes, for instance, children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft.

CCE is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity; drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Children as young as 12 years old have been exploited or moved by gangs to courier drugs out of their local area, however children aged 15–16 is the most common age range.

Both males and females can be vulnerable to exploitation, and it is thought that white British children are being targeted more because gangs perceive that they are more likely to evade police detection, however a person of any ethnicity or nationality may be exploited. Gangs often use social media to make initial contact with children and young people.

Gangs are known to target vulnerable children and adults; some of the factors that heighten a person’s vulnerability to exploitation and chances of being involved in serious violence include:

- having prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse
- lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example)
- social isolation or social difficulties
- economic vulnerability
- homelessness or insecure accommodation status
- connections with other people involved in gangs
- having a physical or learning disability
- having mental health or substance misuse issues
- being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories)
- being excluded from mainstream education

Staff are aware that a key indicator to look out for is missing episodes; if a child has periods of going missing it is possible that they have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs or are involved in serious crime. This is another reason as to why our absence procedure is so important; we inform the police if we have been unable to obtain a reason for a child’s absence as the student is classed as a ‘missing child’. Staff also know that a student who has an unexplained amount of money on them, a new mobile phone or new clothing is an indicator that a student may be involved in county lines/CCE.

Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, serious violence and CCE can affect any child under the age of 18. It can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual; there is usually some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. It can also involve force and/or enticement-cased methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Other indicators may include a change in relationship groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries.

Staff should raise the concern with the DSL as soon as possible and log any information relating to serious violence or CCE via a CPOMS. Social care services will be contacted, as well as the police, if it is deemed that the student is at immediate risk of harm.

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## HOMELESSNESS

A student's welfare can be affected if they are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The DSL will be able to assist families in getting them support; in addition to discussions and supporting letters that can be provided to the Local Housing Authority, it may be deemed necessary to make a referral to children's social care if the child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

It should also be recognised in some cases 16 and 17-year olds could be living independently from their parents or carers, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Children's services will be the lead agency for these young people and the DSL will ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness includes household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse, and antisocial behaviours as well as the family being asked to leave a property.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live.

## DRUG AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Redbourn Park School recognises that young people are at risk from a range of both legal and illegal substances and that substance misuse is an increasing social problem that can have devastating consequences for individuals, their families and the community as a whole. The school is committed to the health, safety and welfare of children and will act to help safeguard their well-being as well as providing support, advice and education about drugs and substance misuse as appropriate. The schools will never condone the misuse of substances, and the possession or supply of illegal drugs, and it will be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

Staff are to report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead and log it on CPOMS.

## FABRICATED OR INDUCED ILLNESS

Fabricated or induced illness is a rare form of child abuse. It occurs when a parent or carer exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child. Where concerns exist about fabricated or induced illness, it requires professionals to work together, evaluating all the available evidence, in order to reach an understanding of the reasons for the child's signs and symptoms of illness. Like other safeguarding concerns, it will be logged on a CPOMS and the DSL will inform relevant agencies as soon as possible.

## CHILDREN AND THE COURTS SYSTEM

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There is guidance available on the government website that explains the process and the support that is available for children.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following a relationship breakdown can be an extremely stressful time for the whole family. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool which parent/carer(s) may find helpful as it offers clear information in the dispute resolution service. Further information on the court system can be found at: <https://helpwithchildarrangements.service.justice.gov.uk/>

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## CHILD EMPLOYMENT

Only children over the age of 13 may be employed to do light work. Regulations determine the type of work and restrict the hours a child may be employed for. Children working in the UK who are still of compulsory school age are required to have a work permit in all cases; it is illegal for a child to work and not have a work permit, even if this is in a family business. Different regulations apply to children in entertainment, where children under thirteen may be licensed to perform in commercial performances under strict guidelines and controls. Further information on children in employment can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/child-employment>

## PRIVATE FOSTERING

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately, without the involvement of a Local Authority, for the care of a child under the age of 16 years of age by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more. Each party involved in the private fostering arrangement has a duty to refer it to the Local Authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to begin, and not to do so would be an offence. The school has a duty to inform social services if we become aware of a private fostering arrangement that has not been shared with the Local Authority. Although there is no duty for the school to be informed of private fostering arrangements it would be helpful if the family could pass on the information to ensure support can be put in place. Further information on private fostering can be found at <https://www.privatefostering.org.uk>

## ALLEGATIONS FROM STUDENTS AGAINST OTHER STUDENTS (including 'upskirting')

In most instances, negative conduct of students towards each other will be covered by our behaviour and anti-bullying policies. However, some allegations and child on child abuse may be of a more serious nature and raise safeguarding concerns. Allegations made against another student may include physical abuse (e.g. violence, particularly pre-planned; forcing the use of drugs or alcohol), emotional abuse (e.g. bullying, blackmail, extortion, threats, intimidation), sexual abuse (e.g. indecent exposure, touching, sexual violence and sexual harassment, sexting, forcing the watching of pornography) and/or sexual exploitation (e.g. photographing or videoing indecent acts).

## SUPERVISION OF STAFF AND THE MANAGEMENT OF ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF

We will always supervise staff and act on any concerns that relate to the safeguarding of children.

Our procedures for managing allegations of abuse against members of staff, including volunteers, are simple and clear – the quick resolution of any allegation is an absolute priority. Put simply, allegations made should be reported straight away, normally to either the designated safeguarding lead, in the first instance, the head of school or the executive head. The school must then involve the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if the allegations meet the harm threshold and require investigation.

In response to an allegation, suspending the member of staff is not the default response, unless there is no reasonable alternative. If suspension is deemed appropriate, the reasons and justification will be recorded by the school's leaders (or proprietor) and the individual notified of the reasons.

Allegations that are found to have been malicious will be removed from personnel records and any that are not substantiated, are unfounded or malicious will not be referred to in employer references.

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Students who have made malicious allegations are likely to have breached the schools' behaviour policy and will receive an appropriate sanction which is likely to be a fixed-term exclusion.

Allegations may indicate that someone has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or; possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or; behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children and/or; behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The procedures for dealing with allegations should be applied with common sense. However, it is important that even 'lower-level' concerns that appear less serious and do not meet the harms threshold are shared with the DSL, recorded and followed-up appropriately.

Our procedure is:

1. The recipient of an allegation must report it to the DSL as soon as possible and never try to investigate it themselves. If the head of school is implicated, it must be reported to the executive head. If the executive head is implicated, it must be reported to the chair of governors. If the chair of governors is implicated, it must be reported to the LADO.
2. A record of the report must be made by the DSL (depending on point 1) which must be timed, dated and include a clearly written name and signature
3. If the allegation is serious and credible and alleges that a member of staff has a) behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child, b) possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or c) behaved towards a child/ren in a way that indicates he/she may pose a risk of harm to children d) behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates he/she may not be suitable to work with children (for example, if there is an incident outside of school which did not involve children but could have an impact on their suitability to work with children e.g. an incident of domestic abuse), the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be informed on the same day
4. If unsure, call the LADO in any case to discuss the allegation
5. Such consultation in point 3/4 will enable the LADO and the school leader to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action
6. If this leads to a decision that no further action is to be taken this decision and the reasons for it should be recorded by both the schools' senior leader and the LADO. They should agree between them the information that should be put in writing to the individual about whom the allegation was made. Both should then consider the action that should follow in respect of that individual and also the person (or persons) who made the allegation
7. If it is decided that the allegation warrants further action the LADO will take this forward
8. The appropriate person should inform the accused person about the allegation as soon as possible, but only after consulting the LADO about whether this is appropriate at this stage and what information can be given to the person
9. Consideration must be given as to whether it is necessary to remove the subject of the allegations from contact with children at the schools, pending investigations and procedures arising from the allegation. Suspension should not be automatic, but should be considered if: a) there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, b) the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or c) the allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal
10. Any decision to suspend shall be taken only after consultation with the LADO. It will take into account the safety of the child or children involved and the impact on any enquiry
11. Where it has been deemed appropriate to suspend the person, written confirmation should be dispatched within 24 hours, giving the reasons for the suspension. The person should be informed at that point who their named contact is within the organisation and provided with their contact details
12. The subject of the allegations (whether suspended or not) shall be: a) advised to contact her/his trade union or professional association, b) treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed, processes involved and possible outcomes, c) kept informed of the progress of the case and of the investigation, d) clearly informed of the outcome of any investigation and the implications for disciplinary or related processes and e) provided with appropriate support as appropriate

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13. A school leader, usually the DSL, shall be responsible for continuing liaison with Hertfordshire LADO and all communication between the schools and other agencies that may be involved in processes following an allegation
- a. Confidentiality is essential and information about an allegation must be restricted to those who have a need to know in order to: a) protect children, b) facilitate enquiries, c) avoid victimisation, d) safeguard the rights of the person about whom the allegation has been made and others who might be affected, e) manage disciplinary/complaints aspects
14. If, following the conclusion of child protection processes, further enquiries are pursued for the purpose of disciplinary, regulatory or complaint investigation, they should be arranged in a way that avoids the repeated interviewing of children or other vulnerable witnesses

## MINIMISING THE RISK

It is inevitable in schools that some students will present a safeguarding risk to other students. A robust induction system ensures that we are informed as to whether a student arrives or re-joins presenting a safeguarding concern, for example after coming back into school following a period in custody or having experienced serious abuse themselves. Intelligent timetabling, groupings, supervision, and personalised risk assessments, including daily dynamic risk assessments, are central to the effective management of safety in our school. This dramatically reduces the possibility of negative conduct against other students, and therefore of allegations.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

We have a risk assessment policy and health & safety policies for every school site, which demonstrate the consideration we give to minimising any risk to the children when on the school premises and when undertaking activities out of school under the supervision of our staff. This also includes alternate provisions, where the school is responsible for the safeguarding of students; risk assessments, site visits and a written statement is obtained from the provider stating that they have completed all the required staff vetting and barring checks that are necessary.

The school acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard all students in potentially vulnerable situations, such as changing rooms, while also acknowledging the child's right to privacy. A professional judgement is made based on the age and the developmental needs of the students; appropriate supervision is achieved by staff being in close proximity to the changing room and students should be aware of this, knowing that adults will enter the room if necessary. Showers at local gym and leisure facilities are available for students to make use of if required.

## ACTING WHERE CONCERNS ARE IDENTIFIED

Our staff recognise the difference between concerns about a child and a child in immediate danger.

If staff have concerns about a child, they will need to report it immediately on CPOMS to alert the DSL and DDSL's. A discussion will then take place with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to agree a course of action.

If a child is in immediate danger or risk of harm a referral may be made immediately to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and/or the police immediately by the member of staff if required, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead being informed of the referral.

**If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about alleged abuse, there are a number of actions that staff will undertake to support the child:**

- The key facts will be established in language that the child understands, and the child's words will be used in clarifying/expanding what has been said.
- No promises will be made to the child, e.g. to keep secrets.

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- Staff will stay calm and be available to listen.
- Staff will actively listen with the utmost care to what the child is saying.
- Where questions are asked, this should be done without pressurising, and only using open questions.
- Leading questions should be avoided as much as possible
- Questioning should not be extensive or repetitive
- Staff will not put words in the child's mouth but will subsequently note the main points carefully.
- A full written record will be kept by the staff duly signed and dated, including the time the conversation with the child took place, outline what was said, comment on the child's body language etc.
- It is not appropriate for staff to make children write statements about abuse that may have happened to them or get them to sign the staff record.
- Staff will reassure the child and let them know that they were right to inform them and inform the child that this information will now have to be passed on.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be immediately informed, unless the disclosure has been made to them.
- Information should be shared with children's social care without delay, either to the child's own social worker or to the MASH. Children's Social Care will liaise with the police where required, which will ensure an appropriate police officer response rather than a uniformed response.
- The Police would only therefore be contacted directly in an emergency.

Staff should never attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected child abuse by interviewing the child or any others involved especially if a criminal act is thought to have occurred. The only people who should investigate child abuse and harm are Social Care, Police or the NSPCC.

## Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential; however, a member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to children; children will not be given promises that any information about an allegation will not be shared.

Where there is a child protection concern it will be passed immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or to children's social care. When a child is in immediate danger children's social care/the police will be contacted.

The Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead will disclose personal information about a student to other members of staff, including the level of involvement of other agencies, only on a 'need to know' basis.

All staff are aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. They are aware that the Data Protection Act 1998 should not be a barrier to sharing of information where failure to do so would result in a child being placed at risk of harm.

We acknowledge further guidance can be found by visiting Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/Childrens-social-care/Child-protection/Hertfordshire-Safeguarding-Children-Partnership/hscp.aspx>

## Information Sharing

Effective sharing of information between practitioners and local organisations and agencies is essential for early identification of need, assessment and service provision to keep children safe. Serious Case Reviews (SCR's) have highlighted that missed opportunities to record and thereby understand the significance of sharing information in a timely manner can have severe consequences for the safety and welfare of children (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 para 23).

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## **We will adopt the information sharing principles detailed in statutory safeguarding guidance contained within:**

- KCSIE 2024
- HM Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- HM Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (which has been updated to reflect the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018.
- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Policy and Practice Guidance.
- Relevant external and external training as appropriate

## **Records and Monitoring**

CPOMS are closely monitored by the DSL. All concerns, actions and outcomes are discussed robustly at SLT meetings, taking place most weeks. Safeguarding updates are provided at Governors meetings and are challenged accordingly. The chair of Governors and safeguarding governor has access to CPOMS and SLT minutes and undertakes audits.

Any concerns about a child will be recorded in writing within 24 hours on our CPOMS system. All records will provide a factual and evidence-based account and there will be accurate recording of any actions, attaching any relevant supporting documents to the online CPOMS report. Any written records will be signed, dated and, where appropriate, witnessed and also attached to CPOMS. Where an opinion or professional judgement is recorded this should be clearly stated as such.

At no time should an individual teacher/member of staff or school be asked to or consider taking photographic evidence of any injuries or marks to a child's person; this type of behaviour could lead to the staff member being taken into managing allegations procedures. The body map below should be used in accordance with recording guidance.

Any concerns should be reported and recorded without delay to the appropriate safeguarding services e.g. CP referral or the child's social worker if already an open case to social care.

Safeguarding, child protection reviews, referrals, Police Intervention, CSE, Self-harm and welfare concerns are just an example of all categories that are on CPOMS to log under, staff ensure that when they are reporting an incident that they log in under the correct category – alerting the DSL & DDSL.

Our school will ensure all our files will be available for external scrutiny for example by a regulatory agency or because of a serious case review or audit.

## **Why recording is important**

Our staff will be encouraged to understand why it is important that recording is comprehensive and accurate and what the messages from serious case reviews are in terms of recording and sharing information. It is often when a chronology of information is pieced together that the level of concern escalates or the whole or wider picture becomes known.

We acknowledge without information being recorded it can be lost. This could be crucial information, the importance of which is not always necessarily apparent at the time. On occasions, this information could be crucial evidence to safeguard a child or be evidence in future criminal prosecutions.

## **The Child Protection (CP), Child in Need (CiN) or Confidential file (Kcsie 2024).**

The establishment of a Child Protection, CiN or Confidential Safeguarding file, which is separate from the child's main school cause for concern category – where on CPOMS any reports/information is logged under

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a CP and CIN category. This is an important principle in terms of storing and collating information about children which relates to either a child protection or safeguarding concern or an accumulation of concerns about a child's welfare which are outside of the usual range of concerns which relate to ordinary life events. It should be borne in mind that what constitutes a 'concern' for one child may not be a 'concern' for another and the child's particular circumstances will need to be taken into account for example if a child is subject to a child protection plan, CiN plan or has looked after status (CLA). Professional judgement will therefore be an important factor when making this decision and will need clear links between pastoral staff and those with Designated Safeguarding Lead responsibilities in school.

A 'child protection' or 'confidential' log on CPOMS should be commenced in the event of:

- A Child Protection referral/Children's Social Care.
- A number of minor concerns on the child's main school file.
- Any child open to social care.
- All 'child protection' or 'confidential' log on CPOMS should contain:
  - A front sheet.
  - A chronology.
  - A record of concern in more detail and body map, where appropriate.
  - A record of concerns and issues shared by others.

The school will keep electronic records of concerns about children even where there is no need to refer the matter to Child Protection/Children's Social Care (or similar) immediately but these records will be kept within the separate CPOMS concerns categories.

Records will be kept up to date and reviewed regularly by the Designated Safeguarding Lead to evidence and support actions taken by staff in discharging their safeguarding arrangements. Original notes will be retained (but clearly identified as such) as this is a contemporaneous account; they may be important in any criminal proceedings arising from current or historical allegations of abuse or neglect. Any live child protection concerns will be kept in a file, which is locked away in the Head Teachers Office, which will be updated regularly and reviewed prior to full Governor's meetings. CPOMS only allows key members of staff to access and view reports.

The 'confidential' file can be active or inactive in terms of monitoring i.e. a child is no longer LAC, subject to a child protection plan or CiN and this level of activity can be recorded on the front sheet as a start and end date. If future concerns arise, they can be reactivated and accordingly logged on CPOMS.

Where children leave the school, we will ensure their confidential/child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible. This should be transferred separately from the main student file, ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. It would be good practice, wherever possible, for the file to be hand-delivered to the receiving designated safeguarding lead with a discussion taking place. There should be a smooth and safe transition for the child.

Those schools and colleges that use electronic case record management systems should continue to have good dialogue between the Designated Safeguarding Leads to ensure children subject to child protection and safeguarding concerns are well supported and any transition arrangements or change of school and or education provision should be seamless.

## Recording Practice

Timely and accurate recording will take place when there are any issues regarding a child.

A recording/logging of each and every incident or concern for the child will be made, including any telephone calls to other professionals. These will also be recorded CPOMS and kept within the child protection file for that child (if a live concern, if not then on CPOMS only), as over time they are likely to help identify any patterns or emerging risks and needs. This will include any contact from other agencies

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who may wish to discuss concerns relating to a child. Actions will be agreed, and roles and responsibility of each agency will be clarified, and outcomes recorded. The chronology will be brief and log activity; the full recording will be on CPOMS.

**NOTE:** Body maps are accessed online on CPOMS to use and where necessary and guidance are below in the Appendices.

Further detailed recording will be added to the CPOMS report and actioned as and where appropriate by the DSL/DDSL. Records will include an analysis of the event or concerns and will take account of the holistic needs of the child, and any historical information held on the child's file.

Support and advice will be sought from social care, or early help whenever necessary. In this way a picture can emerge, and this will assist in promoting an evidence-based assessment and determining any action(s) that needs to be taken.

This may include no further action, or whether a referral should be made to CP/Children's Social Care in-line with the Hertfordshire local authority thresholds.

Such robust practice across child protection and in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children will assist the school and DSL team in the early identification of any concerns which may require addressing further and the prevention of future harm, risk or abuse.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm (through the concern file and through an ongoing dialogue with lead staff). They will ensure that we contribute to assessments of need and support multi-agency plans for those children.

## Educating Young People – Opportunities to teach safeguarding

As a school we will teach children in an age-appropriate way about youth produced imagery, on-line risks associated with social networking to prevent harm by providing them with the skills, attributes and knowledge to help them navigate risks.

This approach to tackling sensitive issues promotes a whole school approach to safeguarding giving children the space to explore key issues and the confidence to seek the support of adults should they encounter problems.

This issue will be taught as part of a wider RSE programme, as RSE has been mandatory in all schools from September 2020 (please see RSE & Curriculum policy).

As part of the curriculum, we spend a great deal of time teaching our students about online safety, all computers in scholar connected via the secure and filtered WIFI system, to ensure any inappropriate sites cannot be accessed. Teaching the students, not just blocking the content, is obviously key – so they can make informed decisions when they are at home/away from school accessing the internet and or social media. We also support parents/carers with online safety by providing them with advice and information leaflets, so they are aware of how to support their children at home when they are accessing the internet and where they can seek further advice/support from.

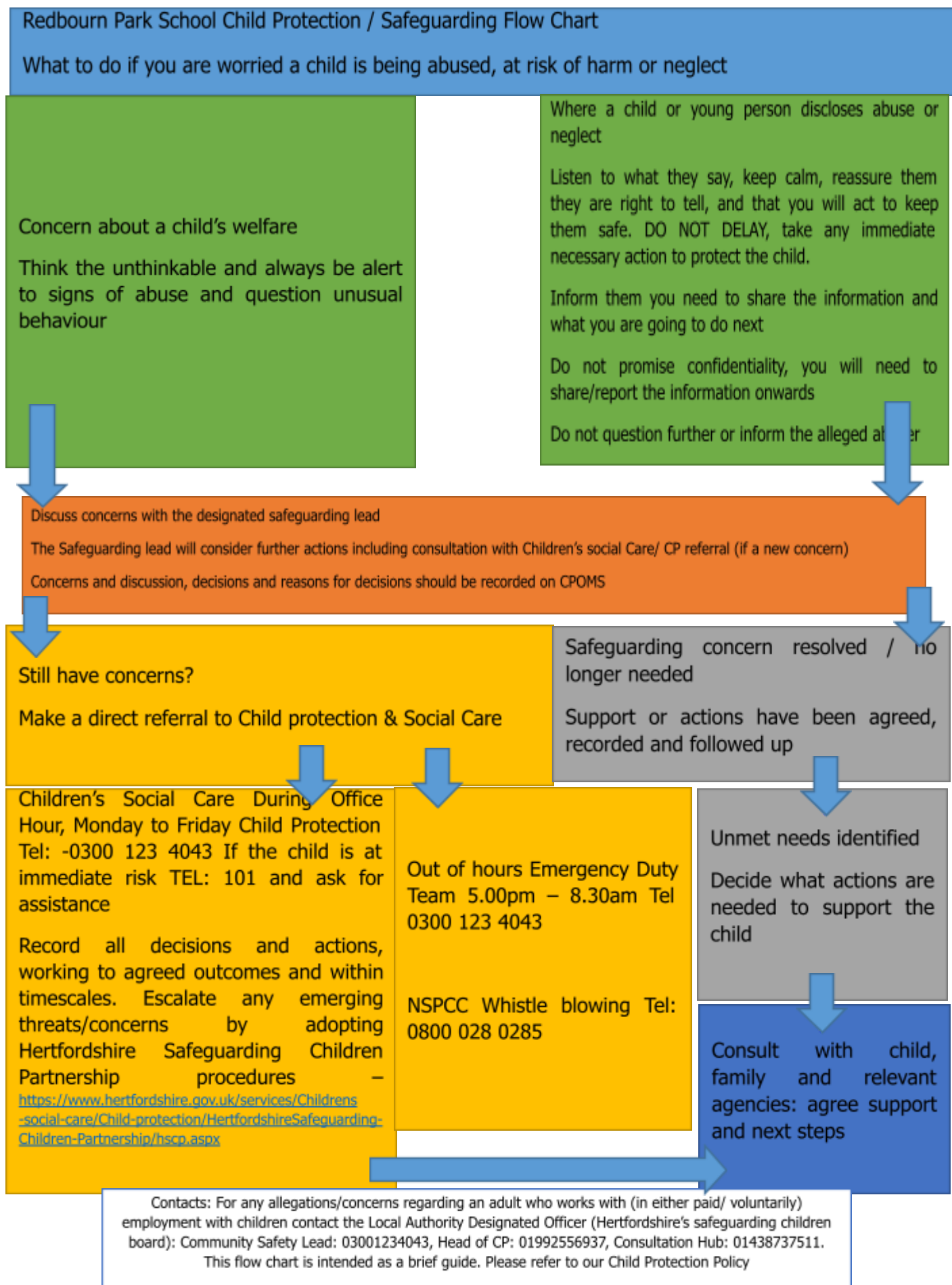
## Helplines and reporting

- Children can talk to a ChildLine counsellor 24 hours a day about anything that is worrying them by ringing 0800 11 11 or in an online chat at <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/1-2-1-counsellor-chat/>
- Where staff members feel unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feel they have a genuine concern that is not being addressed we acknowledge they may wish to consider whistleblowing channels (please see whistleblowing policy). Likewise, if parents and carers are concerned about their child, they can contact the NSPCC Helpline by ringing 0800 028 028 0295, or by emailing [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

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## APPENDIX 1 - reporting map



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## APPENDIX 2 - Body Map Guidance for Schools (Body maps available via head of school)

### Medical assistance should be sought where appropriate.

Body Maps should be used to document and illustrate visible signs of harm and physical injuries.

Do not remove clothing for the purpose of the examination unless the injury site is freely available because of treatment.

\*At no time should an individual teacher/member of staff or school be asked to or consider taking photographic evidence of any injuries or marks to a child's person, this type of behaviour could lead to the staff member being taken into managing allegations procedures, the body map below should be used in accordance with recording guidance. Any concerns should be reported and recorded without delay to the appropriate safeguarding services,

e.g. MASH or the child's social worker if already an open case to social care.

When you notice an injury to a child, try to record the following information in respect of each mark identified e.g. red areas, swelling, bruising, cuts, lacerations and wounds, scalds and burns:

- Exact site of injury on the body, e.g. upper outer arm/left cheek.
- Size of injury - in appropriate centimetres or inches.
- Approximate shape of injury, e.g. round/square or straight line.
- Colour of injury - if more than one colour, say so.
- Is the skin broken?
- Is there any swelling at the site of the injury, or elsewhere?
- Is there a scab/any blistering/any bleeding?
- Is the injury clean or is there grit/fluff etc.?
- Is mobility restricted as a result of the injury?
- Does the site of the injury feel hot?
- Does the child feel hot?
- Does the child feel pain?
- Has the child's body shape changed/are they holding themselves differently?

Importantly the date and time of the recording must be stated as well as the name and designation of the person making the record. Add any further comments as required.

Ensure First Aid is provided where required and record

The body map should be completed and filed accordingly.

## APPENDIX 3 - LINK TO MOST UP TO DATE GUIDANCE

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#)

### Appendix 4 - Changes from the 2023 guidance:

The 2023 guidance update emphasises securing 'positive, trusting and cooperative relationships' with parents and carers. In all versions of WTSC, the importance of information sharing amongst agencies has been highlighted, and the most recent version recognises that improvements must be made to involve families more closely. It also explains the importance of considering the needs of the whole

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family. For example, families with English as an additional language (EAL) may require more specialist support to keep them involved and informed.

The new version of the guidance also outlines new roles within the local authority, the police and health services. It states that the head of each sector will be named the Lead Safeguarding Partner (LSP), and they must appoint a Delegated Safeguarding Partner (DSP). It is expected that LSPs will form close relationships with representatives from the education sector, who should also be involved in any strategic decisions and planning.

The changes also include:

- Guidance on considering the wider context of a child’s situation when making social care assessments.
- New multi-agency practice standards to strengthen cooperation between services.
- An explanation regarding a need for local authorities to appoint lead practitioners with the capabilities to act upon referrals by completing assessments and coordinating services.
- An outline of the need for local authorities to appoint a Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) to improve collaboration between social care services and the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) system.
- Revised guidance on improving provision for disabled children and their families.
- Guidance on recognising and responding to risk of harm to children outside the home.

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